



In Brief

USDA Forest Service - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Summer 2003 Construction Projects at Eagle Falls Trailhead Parking and Inspiration Point

Issue: Construction of accessibility retrofits at Inspiration Point, and Best Management Practices and parking upgrades at Eagle Falls Trailhead (both at Emerald Bay area) will be necessary for the summer of 2003 (July through October). A series of significant factors make it necessary to conduct both projects simultaneously, and necessity will cause disruptions in visitor access and parking availability. The LTBMU will make every reasonable effort to reduce impacts to visitors, while maintaining the highest concern for safety.

Description of Projects

- **Eagle Falls Trailhead Parking Area**

This significant location is scheduled for construction work this summer to retrofit the facility to meet required parking standards, vehicle access, and to resolve erosion, run-off, soil compaction and other environmental quality issues in this sensitive stream environment zone. At the same time, accessibility upgrades will be completed, along with improved restroom facilities and turn-around access for public transportation vehicles.

Parking Conditions: During the construction period (July through October), the existing entrance and 36 car parking area will be closed. The overflow parking area just to the North of the parking lot entrance along Rt. 89 will be intermittently open, with the occasional need for construction parking. We anticipate that around half of the overflow spaces will be regularly available, for day use parking only.

Restroom Facility: The restroom building will be closed during the construction period. The building will be removed and replaced with a new facility.

Trailhead Access: An alternative entrance from the overflow parking to the trailhead will be provided in order to maintain pedestrian access to this important trailhead. This alternate trail will be outside the fenced work area.

Transportation Access Alternatives: There will be no overnight vehicle parking in the Eagle Falls/Vikingsholm area. Wilderness Area users are encouraged to use parking facilities at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, where wilderness permits are issued.

Trolley and Shuttle services are offered daily in summer from South Lake Tahoe, Truckee and Tahoe City to the Emerald Bay area.

- **Inspiration Point Project**

This project is also scheduled for this summer (July-October) in order to meet the requirements of an agreement with the Access Board to resolve identified accessibility needs. This agreement, reached two years ago, previously scheduled this project work for the summer of 2003. The funding has been established and all planning, design and specifications are ready and on track in accordance with this agreement.

The project will create necessary and legally required accessibility features, upgrade parking and pedestrian access into and out of the Inspiration Point facility. The project is identified to begin after July 7, 2003, and will be completed on or before October 2003.

During the construction period, Inspiration Point, along with parking on both sides of Highway 89 will be closed and fenced due to serious public safety concerns at this vulnerable road curve area.

Parking: Due to the nature of the site, serious safety concerns, and the closure of the view area during the work, there will be no parking or parking alternative for Inspiration Point during the construction period.

Site Access: For serious safety reasons, Inspiration Point will be fenced and closed during the construction period.

Bayview Campground: Bayview Campground and its access road will remain open during the construction period. The location is expected to have day use parking impacts as a result of the projects.

- **Project Coordination**

The LTBMU staff are coordinating this project with Caltrans, California State Parks, and the California Highway Patrol.

Public Transportation Options:

Public Transit options will provide service from both south and north shore locations to the Emerald Bay area.

- From Truckee- Take TART Service to Tahoe City, and transfer for the West Shore Route to Sugar Pine Point State Park. Trolley service continues hourly to the Emerald Bay area stops, 9 am to 6 pm.
- From South Lake Tahoe- Take the Nifty 50 Trolley service from South Lake Tahoe, Emerald Bay Road to Camp Richardson and Taylor Creek Visitor Center. The Emerald Bay Shuttle continues service from the Snow Park area, just north of Taylor Creek to Emerald Bay area stops.

Back Country Overnight Hikers-

- Recommend parking vehicles at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center (Wilderness Permit Station) and using public transportation to the Eagle Falls Trailhead or trailheads near Bayview.

Questions and Answers

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- *What alternatives are being explored to reduce parking and access problems?*

Trolley and Shuttle services are offered daily in summer from South Lake Tahoe, Truckee and Tahoe City to the Emerald Bay area. This service will continue as normal. This service will be promoted in media notifications about these projects, and throughout the construction period.

These two projects will result in a temporary loss of approximately 60 parking spaces. Although this number of spaces seems low, the very high turn-around numbers in the Emerald Bay area result in 30,000 to 50,000 visitors annually. A considerable effort will be made locally, regionally and nationally, to distribute and provide information about these projects to avoid as much visitor inconvenience as possible.

- *Why are both projects being done at the same time? Could one be delayed until next year to reduce impacts on access and parking?*

Originally, these two projects were to be scheduled independently to reduce visitor impacts. The Inspiration Point project has been scheduled for 2003 for some time,

however recent competitive contracting bid requirements will postpone start of the project until July. Due to the agreement with the Access Board on accessibility issues, as well as the necessity to complete this project with authorized funds in 2003, this project will proceed as scheduled.

The Eagle Falls project was originally scheduled for work in 2002; however the funds were deferred in a service-wide action to assist with the severe fire season. The project has been moved into the 2003 construction period. Delaying the project and re-scheduling into 2004, poses the possibility that the funding will be lost for the foreseeable future.

In the initial planning for this construction season, the Eagle Falls Parking project was originally to begin after completion of the Inspiration point project. This original schedule would have closed the parking area from late summer 2003 through the spring of 2004. However, Congress earmarked the funding for this project for 2003, earlier than expected. The funding will be available for obligation only in fiscal year 2003. Should this project be delayed, there is a serious possibility that the funding may be lost due to deferrals of funding to cover national wildfire costs in the event of a heavy fire season. Should this occur, the process to re-establish funding for this needed project, along with re-scheduling for the project will take several more years to re-start.

The LTBMU Leadership Team understands fully that scheduling both projects during the same period will cause significant parking and visitor convenience problems. Every effort will be made, and all reasonable steps will be taken to inform the public and provide alternatives to reduce impacts.

- ***Why close all parking near Inspiration Point? Couldn't the closure be limited only to the lake-side of 89, leaving the other side open and available to parking?***

The primary interest is safety. The entire lake-side area of the Inspiration Point day use area will have to be closed and fenced for safety during the construction process. Keeping the parking open on the opposite side of the road will result in visitors parking, only to be unable to enter the point. This will inevitably result in pedestrians crossing into dangerous slope and cliff areas outside the fencing and the potential of serious injury. Additionally, keeping the opposite side parking open will result in unacceptable risks, with an increase in pedestrian traffic along the road, concentrating foot traffic at a dangerous road curve.

In the interest of public safety, it is necessary to close parking on both sides of Highway 89 at Inspiration Point in order to reduce risks to the public.

- ***When will the fencing be put up?***

Fencing is expected to be set-up at construction sites on or just after July 7, 2003.

Updated 5/23/03